

by Alan R. Everson

Valid name *Etelis coruscans* Valenciennes 1862 (Fig. 62)

Synonymy *Etelis evurus* Jordan and Evermann 1905

Etelis carbunculus Gosline and Brock 1960

Common and

vernacular names Red snapper; ruby-colored snapper; longtail snapper; onaga; uaula; ulaula koae

Distribution

Caught throughout the year around the main Hawaiian Islands and the NWHI from Bank 1 to Kure Atoll. Found slightly deeper (183 to 256 m) than the other Hawaiian snappers. It is caught on or near the bottom in areas of steep drop-offs, ledges, and pinnacles.

Distinguishing characteristics

D. X, 11; A. III, 8; Gr. 15+6 (Jordan and Evermann 1905). Body rather long, tapered, moderately compressed. Head longer than deep, bluntly pointed snout, large oblique mouth. Small bands of villiform teeth on the palatines and interior part of each jaw. Single row of small, wide set, slender canine teeth on the outer edge of each jaw, which also has a single canine tooth anteriorly. Deeply notched dorsal fin almost divided into two separate fins. Dorsal fin rays about equal in length. Anal fin similar in shape to soft dorsal. Caudal fin deeply notched producing long lobes; upper lobe longer; lobes get longer with age, taper into long caudal rays that are characteristic of onaga.

Color brilliant rose red.

Life history

Little is known about the life history of onaga in the NWHI. Their reproductive cycle is probably similar to that of ehu. Ripe and near ripe ovaries were collected in August and September at Raita Bank. However, onaga ovaries were collected only during summer months.

A linear growth stanza derived from five age determinations provided the following length-age estimates: 21.0 cm FL at 1 year and 58.1 cm at 2 years (Uchiyama and Tagami 1984).

The functional length-weight relationship for onaga 48.0 to 88.0 cm FL is:

$$W = 2.99 \times 10^{-8} L^{2.9003},$$

where W = weight (kg) and L = fork length (mm) (Uchiyama et al. 1984).

The sex ratio of fish caught in the NWHI is 69:31 (N = 64) in favor of females. The mean weight of males is 4.28 kg and for females 5.45 kg in the NWHI.

Gear and catch

The species is caught by deep-sea handline. Historically, onaga has been an important commercial species in Hawaiian waters (Uchida et al. 1979). It is a valuable fish commanding high wholesale prices (see footnote 14). During 1961-68, annual catch increased from 19,500 to 31,700 kg, but from 1969 to 1974, the annual catch decreased and fluctuated between a narrow range of 17,300 and 22,800 kg. The annual catch rose sharply to 30,000 kg in 1975 and 41,100 kg in 1976 then declined steadily to 22,100 kg in 1979. The average annual catch from 1961 to 1979 was 25,900 kg.



Figure 62.—*Etelis coruscans*.